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Pixação and Tourist Appraisal

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Photographs courtesy of Rafael Freitas

In Berlin

Pixação is a stylistically distinctive form of graffiti which is associated mainly with São Paulo but is also found in other cities in Brazil. The images above give a sense of what it looks like. Pixação often uses letters/signs which are known only to an inner circle, appears in seemingly inaccessible spots (such as tall buildings), and principally consist in tagging (stating the pixadore's *nom de guerre* or tag). Pixadores generally work in groups (crews) and come from impoverished backgrounds and deprived neighbourhoods.

For the 2012 Berlin Biennale of Contemporary Art, curator Artur Żmijewski arranged for pixadores from São Paulo to present a workshop entitled “Politics of the Poor.” The work of Grupo Cripta, Grupo União 22 and Grupo Operação were to feature there. The workshop was to be held at the 19th century Saint Elisabeth Church at Invalidenstrasse on 9 June. A panel was set up for the pixadores to demonstrate their art, and presentations were organized. The event was advertised as follows on the Biennale website:

Pixadores are members of the Pixação movement in São Paulo. It's a huge number of people from the lower class who use street art to express their political wishes through a language of tagging that they developed. [...] Pixação tags [...] are spread all over São Paulo, from public squares to rooftops and balconies of the many deserted skyscrapers, walls, and barriers. Almost every street in this city with a population of 11 million is tagged. Pixadores have also targeted those locations where artists can achieve visibility. (“Politics of the Poor” 2012)

Shortly afterwards, a somewhat longer statement was issued with a pixação exhibition on 15 June at the Café Wendel (“Politics of the Periphery” 2012), a hot spot for trendily subversive art in Berlin.

But the big event was the appearance of genuine pixadores, straight from the gritty ground-level of São Paulo, in the prestigious international art forum of the Berlin Biennale. Curator Żmijewski's substantial reputation as a provocative and subversive artist and filmmaker seemed invested in the Biennale, and it made sense for pixação to unusually figure there as art. An article featured on the Biennale website prior to the event observed:

With this Berlin Biennale, in which Artur Żmijewski acts without showing consideration for acceptance, feelings, vanity, political correctness, positive media coverage, or working together in a cordial way, the institution has taken a great risk. This also regards the fact that today, shortly before the opening of this Berlin Biennale, we do not know what the results will be. This uncertainty and open process is what

Żmijewski demands unconditionally; it is something that -- when combined with a radical critique of institutions and a general broadening of the concept of art -- is contradictory and often in direct opposition to the current conditions for institutional work. Tolerating this and making it productive in opening up other perspectives was something that we all had to learn. (Horn 2012)

On 9 June afternoon the pixadores – Cripta, Biscoito, William and RC -- appeared at the Saint Elisabeth Church to do their thing. They found the panel put up for them a bit restrictive. It didn't challenge them enough. However, the church itself looked like exactly the sort of edifice they could festoon with pixação. They pulled out their climbing ropes and got down (or rather, up) to work. The audience and bystanders were outraged. Żmijewski and the police were summoned. An angry Żmijewski remonstrated with the pixadores, and, in a fit of rage, threw water at Cripta Djan. He was doused with yellow paint in return.

The implications of this incident have been variously examined in blogs, discussion sites and news reports. On the one hand, the circumscriptions of the international art establishment appeared to be put into relief. It seemed obvious that however adventurous an event such as the Berlin Biennale might be, however open to the freedoms and subversions of art, however sympathetic to diverse expressions from “the lower class” of the world, there were certain boundaries that couldn't be crossed. The unwritten contract between hosts and international guests was discussed; the sanctity of heritage sites cited; the firmness of the frames within which art is understood to be (allowed to be) art debated. On the other hand, the features of pixação also seemed to be clarified. Evidently, it is not just an end-result but the daring process (the performance) that drives it; its relation to a habitus (São Paulo), with the internal social dynamics and schisms therein, is crucial for its enactment and effect; that relation is essentially a transgressive one. In brief, it seemed that this attempt at putting pixação in the international art circuit had productively highlighted limitations on both sides: pixação seemed unassimilable, untranslatable, to an environment outside São Paulo... extrinsic to Brazil... to both global art audiences and the pixadores.

In São Paulo

This fraught appearance of pixação in a non-Brazilian... European... setting, accentuating the distance between local phenomenon and global art circuit, is interesting in ways that were not picked up in subsequent discussions. The cultural distance between Berlin and São Paulo was naturally foregrounded; consequently, the possibility that the displacement of pixação in

Berlin was actually coterminous with the place of pixação in São Paulo was not considered. Arguably displacement in Berlin and place in São Paulo worked to not wholly contrary effect: the former in some ways coincided with the drift of the latter. That's another way of saying that even within its habitus, amidst the social dynamics which gave birth to and nurtured it, pixação has a displaced place. This is probably easily forgotten by the habitual São Paulo *flâneur*. An incident such as the above, where pixação is abrasively exposed to an entirely unhabituated gaze, may nevertheless resonate with the São Paulo *flâneur*.

The internal displacement of pixação, within São Paulo, is naturally subtle and habituated. It is found in the contemplative and informed São Paulo resident's view and written into insider-knowledge. It is grounded in the dominant voice which takes note of and thinks about pixação while being at home in São Paulo.

In saying this, I am not referring to the denizens and officials of São Paulo who find pixação distasteful, evidence of vandalism, and a blight on the environment that's best wiped out -- such as those who drove the "clean city" law (*Lei Cidade Limpa*) in 2006. The law wasn't particularly targeted at pixação but at visual intrusions (particularly advertisements), though a further law in 2007, decriminalizing some forms of artistic graffiti, was understood as defining pixação as illegal. Initially, the "clean city" law meant that billboards and advertisements and all sorts of graffiti were removed, as were some street artworks to the dismay of art aficionados. In this, the "clean city" proponents acted as city officials and city-proud citizens have acted whenever graffiti of any sort has outraged their tastes: in a similar mould, for instance, considerably more draconian measures against graffiti in 1980s New York City were documented in the film *Style Wars* (1983, dir. Tony Silver and Henry Chalfont). Taking note of and thinking about pixação involves something different: an attempt to come to grips with and understand pixação in terms of various conceptual frames -- frames which enable mapping, containment, analysis, evaluation, and explanation. That sort of framing occurs wherever an audience *pauses* before a visual artefact or scene: always with an appraising eye, even if only to eventually dismiss what's before it.

In a way though, the moment of the "clean city" also threw forth perhaps the most suggestive frame for contemplating pixação -- more exactly, a non-frame. It threw up a frame for street and graffiti art which placed pixação outside its scope. In the initial enthusiasm to clean the city with legal backing, as I noted, some street art was damaged, notably a prominent legal mural by reputed street artists Os Gêmeos, Nunca and Nina at the 23 de Maio expressway. Several street art actions protesting against the "clean city" law were undertaken. The controversy led to the creation of a register of street art to be preserved and protected in

São Paulo, and the further legal clarification in 2007 mentioned above. Unsurprisingly, *pixação* remained illegal. Street and graffiti art in São Paulo, as in various large metropolises around the world, already had a significant following in the art establishment and a corresponding value in the art market. Indeed, São Paulo was reputed for its particularly vibrant street and graffiti art scene. The Beco do Batman was regarded as an open air street art gallery then as now; private galleries specializing in street art such as the Choque Cultural Centre appeared; major public galleries began getting into it too in due course -- the Museu Brasileiro da Escultura (MuBE) hosted the First International Biennial of Graffiti Fine Art in September 2010, and in November 2012 Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) held the *De Dentro e De Fora* (Inside Out and Outside In) exhibition featuring street artists. Notable street artists received commissions from the city government and businesses, and street and graffiti art came to be regarded as public art.

All that meant that *pixação* was firmly placed as the *other* of street and graffiti art, akin and yet opposed, a kind of parergon which refuses what's in the frame. *Pixação* and Brazilian street art came to define each other by their mutually negating thrust and juxtaposition – succinctly described by Teresa Caldeira:

Today what most *paulistanos* recognize as graffiti are large and colorful murals painted mainly in public surfaces using not only aerosols but also latex paint. [...] The compositions are applied to very large spaces, especially viaducts, underpasses, and retaining walls, but they are never found on subway cars and public buses. Moreover, graffiti in São Paulo has developed an amicable relationship with city hall, unlike responses to graffiti in cities such as New York. [...] Graffiti has thus become a type of relatively sanctioned public art in São Paulo and is so prevalent that it has become its own tourist attraction: graffiti tours are now easily available in the city. [...] Street art and graffiti have definitively been integrated into the cultural production of the city.

If graffiti has always maintained links to the art world and can be assimilated into the imaginary of art and beauty, *pixação* is not absorbable in any easy way and has remained much more transgressive. [...] *Pixação* is made either with spray cans or with black paint and small foam rollers. São Paulo's *pixação* has its own renowned style: a calligraphy made of vertically elongated and pointy letters using straight lines. It is sometimes called "straight tag" — *tag reto*. [...] *Pixação* is conceived by its practitioners as an anarchic intervention and a kind of radical urban sport. (Caldeira 2012, pp.393-6)

The mutually-constructive juxtaposition of the globally and officially assimilated street art and the resistant and localized pixação offers a frame for contemplating both – especially the frame-shy latter. Accordingly, pixadores seemed to take to heart this newfound definition that is also an evasion of definition, and took possession of its anti-establishment credentials by going to war on street art particularly and the art establishment generally. So, a pixação attack was organized by art student-cum-pixadore Rafael Guedes Augustaitiz “Pixobomb” and high-profile pixadore Djan Ivson Silva “Cripta Djan” with around 50 pixadores on the Centro Universitário Belas Artes de São Paulo in June 2008. Rafael explained later that this attack was his final-year art project. In fact Rafael and Cripta had a busy few months in 2008. They also arranged a similar attack on the Choque Cultural Gallery in September 2008, while a street art exhibition was up in there. Pixadores went in and sprayed graffiti on the walls and over the paintings and posters and even on the ceiling. In October 2008 Rafael arranged for an invasion of 40 pixadores in the São Paulo Art Biennial (for a discussion of these see Juxtapoz 2008). And the war naturally took to the streets: for instance, in March 2010 the same pixadores hit a legal mural by Os Gêmeos, Nunca, Nina, Finok and Zefix, which the city had commissioned for about BRL 200,000. Along with tags, in an unusually voluble moment the pixadores left a political statement upon the mural: “\$ 200,000.00 em \$ MAQUIAGEM E A CIDADE EM CALAMIDADE” (200,000 for makeup while the city faces calamity).

It appears then that pixação becomes politically articulated through its juxtaposition against street and graffiti art: as an expression of class war, at the interstices of bourgeois establishment v. proletarian/lumpen proletarian mass, mainstream city v. marginalised city, the global art discourse of the vaunted cognoscenti v. the locally-grounded demand scrawled by the disregarded ignorant. But, we may ask, whose articulation is this, who is voicing pixação thus? That Rafael “Pixobomb” was an *art student* working on his final year thesis by organising the attacks seems indicative. So does the fact that Djan Cripta appears as the *high-profile* representative of pixadores, individualized, with an aura of heroic leadership and insider-authority. It is comforting from an establishment perspective to be able to pin authority and representativeness on individuals for an unpredictable and ghostly collective, to be able to talk to a media-savvy personality – so eventually Djan Cripta was to become the only Brazilian pixadore to be profiled in *The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti* (Schacter 2013, pp.114-5). There is a whiff of professional revolutionaries here, the emancipated bourgeois intellectual with a developed proletarian consciousness or a bourgeoized subaltern intellectual speaking on behalf of pixadores, shaping and managing the public profile of

pixação. The construction of pixação politics is obviously not quite in terms of the discreteness and integrity of pixação culture, but channelled and shaped via global street and graffiti art. The construction consists in instrumentalizing the perpetually displaced character of pixação to, paradoxically, contain it and render it politically articulate and definite. Effectively such conceptual framing gestures *at* pixação, *speaks on behalf* of pixação, renders pixação *tractable*, and also removes itself from the habitus and immediacy and abrasive force of pixação. In fact, it is akin to the intellectual (not necessary professional academic) gaze that tries to fix pixação into a grid of political commitment and analytical amenability against the grain of its performance and effect. Pixação doesn't quite fit in compliantly; it is made to fit in, and therefore it also slips outside these insider frames.

Perhaps that's always what happens in intellectual framing. But usually such framing does capture the nuances of its objects persuasively, and only occasionally fails to persuade – which leads to more and more tentative intellectual interest. Pixação has attracted a steady dribble of such interest, or at the least a desire to document, systematize and theorize: there are coffee table and scholarly books/theses about graffiti and pixação (e.g. Lost Art, Neeson, Manco 2005; Boleta org. 2006; Chastanet 2007; Oliveira 2009; Lassala 2010), many books on São Paulo's urban environment which bear upon analysing pixação (such as Caldeira 2001, Foster 2011), and so many relevant magazine features and scholarly papers and chapters that it would be tedious to list them. Each, insofar as pixação is considered, is about framing it (or mapping the space behind or afore it) so that it is contained and explained. And in each, pixação turns out to be an elusive surface of performance and signs which reflects more about the gaze turned on it than revealing itself: more is conveyed about the aesthete's taste, the grids of urban and cultural study, the reforming pedagogue seeking *conscientização* (for a discussion of the term, Iddings *et al* 2011), the political ideologue trying to represent the downtrodden, the social historian and ethnologist building desiderata and taxonomies of contemporary everyday life in São Paulo. Many of these consult pixadores and try to find deeper significance behind their statements. And there's the growing stream of documentaries and short films, delving the lives, sentiments and performances behind the veil of pixação – such as: Djan Cripta org. DVD series, *Escrita Urbana* (from 2006) and *100 Comedia* (from 2009); Joao Wainer and Roberto T. Oliveira dir. *Pixo* (2009); Marcello Guerra and Gustavo Coelho dir. *Luz, câmera, pichação* (2011); Ben Newman dir. *Os Pixadores* (2011). All are informative, but ultimately all are more informative about their own medium than the mediated object. The style of the scribe and the eye behind the lens seem to struggle against the screen of pixação, seeking to break through it and revealing mainly the mechanics of their

own mediations. The pixadores seem more heroic and exotic (or commonplace and ordinary) than plausible, pixação more meaningful and suggestive (or perhaps meaningless and empty) than expected. Something always seems to be beyond communication. Pixação constantly confirms its own displacement from attempts to grasp it because of the sheer middle-classness of intellectual mediations and media, the overwhelmingly middle-class audience that awaits and consumes these mediations and media. Pixação constantly appears as signs of the irreconcilable *other* to those who mediate for it and talk about and analyse it.

But the conundrum is deeper: there is also a tinge of bad faith in such intellectual documenting, systematizing and theorizing, in such tracts of insider pixação-knowledge. While the documenting, systematizing and theorizing are seemingly undertaken to expose the underpinnings of pixação without disturbing it, to capture pixação *as it is*, nevertheless such undertakings do tacitly *intervene* in pixação – and subtly dispose it for ends which are contrary to its thrust. It always seems possible that such mediation actually facilitates the appropriation of pixação from its habitus so as to render it available for establishment ends, for the aggrandizement of bourgeois tastes and economies. The very framing (or non-framing) of pixação via street art seems to open pathways for the latter to disaggregate and co-opt from the former. The legal, establishment-friendly, community-loving, pro-social fold of street art can then absorb some of the distinctiveness and energy from its other, from pixação, and redirect them within itself. There is thus an air of wistfulness in street artist Caleb Neeson's contemplation on pixação when he observes: "While graffiti writers and street artists the world over are a well-networked group [...] the pixadores haven't snapped up the style, fonts, media, methods, or esthetics of their cousins. Pixação doesn't want to be art. If it were art, it wouldn't hit its mark" (Neeson 2006, p.32). Neeson could see how pixação could become art by adapting some of the practices of graffiti, but he could also see how that would render pixação ineffective, not quite pixação any longer. Most graffitiists and street artists have been less circumspect in this respect. The appropriation of pixação style into graffiti ("grapixo") is a reasonably well-developed practice: numerous grapixo crews are at work across South America. Celebrity street artists like Os Gêmeos and Nunca have used pixação elements in their (usually commissioned) artworks. In itself that seems to be entirely in synch with graffiti culture, which usually consists in (often ironic) appropriations and adaptations. Pixação itself putatively found its stylistic inspiration from heavy metal record sleeves, in turn drawn from runic symbols. But the grapixo sort of appropriation is inevitably tinged with bad faith when its *modus operandi* is in the service of profit-making industry and the entrepreneurial system; such appropriation seems to mock and steal from the impetus of

pixação rather than simply turn away from it or let it be. It is a step that undermines the intellectual integrity enjoined on recording, systematizing and theorizing, and renders intellectual engagement instrumental for systematic expropriation.

If grapixo artworks are commissioned they have not merely appropriated and adapted from pixação but also aligned themselves with systematic expropriation, effectively complying with the established system which pixação seems to transgress upon, seems to address abrasively. But this drift of sucking pixação into the service of the masters it seemingly strikes an attitude (a pose) against is a continuous pressure. The process involves a delicate and tangential sieving which can scarcely be tracked clearly, let alone resisted through the performance and appearance of pixação. So, several books about pixação (such as Boleta org. 2006, Lassala 2010, Willem de Koonig Academy 2011) explore the design possibilities of the writing style of pixação; unsurprisingly these have led typeface designers to develop pixação-inspired fonts which are offered for sale (such as Brazil Pixa Reto, Adrenalina, Pixa). Some clothing companies sell their brands and stock by capitalising on the charitable impulses aroused in consumers when contemplating pixação ... associated with poverty, favelas, youth. Others simply sell their brand and stock by using pixação style. A significant range of LUTA Sportswear, which gives half its profits to the charity Fight for Peace, uses pixação-inspired logos and designs. According to a Forbes report: “In 2012 the company transferred over \$100,000 of its take to Fight For Peace which is only a few drops in the bucket as the 100-person organization burns through about \$7 million a year” (Strauss 2013). In 2010, artist Nunca collaborated with Nike Inc. (the Nike 6 Collaborations) to design and launch a range of footwear and clothing, including the Brazilian football team kit – the logo “Brasil” appeared in pixação-like lettering. The collaboration was reported thus: “Inspired by Incan symbolism and a primitive style of graffiti called ‘Pixação,’ Sao Paolo street artist Nunca crafted a unique Brazilian kit that connects the people of the favelas to the sport they hold dear” (Fischer 2010). Ben Newman’s short film *Os Pixadores* (2011), which I mentioned above, was of a series exploring youth subcultures by Pulse films sponsored by clothing retailer ASOS and footwear corporation Puma, as part of the Autumn/Winter 2012 campaign to launch the ASOS Black X Puma shoe.

Does all this mean, one might ask, that pixação has become “mainstream”, become part of the establishment? Not quite: few pixadores have initiated the commercial/philanthropic moves described above (if they have, it’s a well-hidden fact), and no pixação is involved therein (only mediations and derivations and appropriations and adaptations). These moves simply confirm the perpetual displacement of pixação – as much

within São Paulo ... Brazil at large ... as in Berlin ... Europe at large ... and elsewhere. Differences in the sharpness of displacement in different locations are more a matter of degree than of kind, arising from greater or lesser familiarity with the habitus of *pixação*.

Tourist Appraisal

I began with the displacements that became apparent during a foray of *pixação* outside Brazil, into Germany, and then went on to suggest that those are coterminous with displacements found within Brazil, even within São Paulo, and despite insider-knowledge and habituation. There is a metaphor of displaced looking which can be usefully evoked here: *tourist appraisal*, the view of the tourist in an unfamiliar cityscape (say São Paulo), as a metaphor for intellectual curiosity about *pixação*. This has a particular resonance for this essay, in English, and the present author – the alert reader would already have noted that my references are predominantly from English language sources, grounded in an Anglophone circuit. In brief, these reflections have extended from a view that has translated, linguistically and otherwise, the São Paulo cityscape and its manifold exchanges (including *pixação*) as an unhabituated tourist must.

I prefer “tourist appraisal” to the more popular “tourist gaze”, much used since John Urry’s (1990) book of that title, because *appraisal* suggests pause and contemplation while *gaze* is relatively passive. In fact, much sociological literature on tourism has been concerned, as Urry’s book was, with the experience of the tourist and the structures that guide that experience as if these have a stable relationship with each other -- in John Urry and Jones Larsen’s *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (2011), however, there’s a useful chapter on tourist gaze as performance, which is relevant here. For my metaphor, the activeness of appraisal is more apt, and I have in mind really a somewhat earlier and crucial formulation of the more searching tourist experience (sightseeing) offered by Dean MacCannell:

After considerable inductive labour, I discovered that *sightseeing is a ritual performed to the differentiations of society*. Sightseeing is a kind of collective striving for a transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of inserting its fragments into unified experience. Of course, it is doomed to eventual failure; even as it tries to construct totalities, it celebrates differentiation. (MacCannell 1976, p.13)

In a general way, for MacCannell this is manifested as a touristic search for “authenticity”, a desire to break through the structures and pathways and consumable experiences that are

designed for tourists. These are designed by state agencies, travel agents, heritage and sightseeing firms, brochures and guidebooks, etc. so that tourists' "paths can be traced in advance over small increments of what is for them increasingly *apparent* authenticity proffered by tourist settings" (p.106). This touristic desire for authenticity is as spurious as the notion of "authenticity" is, and therefore doomed to eventual failure; it is ultimately a reflection of modern middle-class consciousness and desire (now a "transcendent consciousness"). The consanguinity between intellectual striving to get to deeper truths and the tourist search for authenticity is noted by MacCannell, and works through the intellectual double-take which both partakes of a touristic quest and decries touristic invasion and disturbance. That tourist appraisal could be a *productive* metaphor and tool for self-reflection in academic investigation into unfamiliar territory is relatively seldom delved – but MacCannell clearly gestured towards it. Numerous debates about anthropological fieldwork bear usefully on this metaphor, but here I don't go there.

In contemplating *pixação* as I have been doing so far, such a notion of tourist appraisal has an obvious appeal. My academic approach here to *pixação* in São Paulo is really little more than a nuancing of tourist appraisal, spurred by a feeling that all approaches to *pixação* available to me have an element of tourist appraisal in them.

As a searching tourist every view of every quarter of unfamiliar São Paulo becomes a vast gallery, and I actively appraise every view to mark what connects with past experiences, what I am able to associate with something I know, what eludes connections and associations and need speculative explanations, and so on. Indeed, I look for the chimerical authentic unity of São Paulo, even though aware of the inevitable failure of this search. In my tourist appraisal, the points of particular interest are obviously elusive associations and explanations – and in São Paulo inevitably *pixação* jumps out of the cityscape, from well-dispersed edifices and neighbourhoods. Obviously I associate it with graffiti that I have seen everywhere (usually in the ubiquitous New York style), and that simply confirms the slippage and displacement of *pixação* from that association. My guidebook or the friendly São Paulo native at my side gives me the briefest introduction to this visual experience (favelas, youth, gangs, lower class rage and resistance, vandalism, etc.), and it naturally spurs my tourist interest the more – *pixação* seems to offer a visible phenomenon that gestures towards the authentic *depths* of São Paulo, beyond my tourist circuit and therefore precisely that which prods my tourist desire. So I look further, and indeed the tourist industry does cater to such a searching tourist desire too; it prepares authentic experiences for tourists in advance and thereby, perversely, also disappoints the tourist desire (if it was a *really* authentic experience

other tourists shouldn't have access to it). Nevertheless it is there, to some degree. Everything is catered for a tractable tourist desire from somewhere in the tourist industry. So, there are favela tours in Rio de Janeiro to satisfy the wish to see authentic poverty (on this, see Freire-Medeiros 2009, Rolfes 2011), probably conceived after watching *Cidade de Deus* (2002, dir. Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund) somewhere on the global film circuit. There's plenty of pixação in Rio too. And there are street art tours in São Paulo (just as there are in London and New York and other cities). But these disappoint not merely in being pre-arranged, in anticipating the tourist desire for authentic experience, but actually in always seeming to skim the surface of pixação, in only accentuating its strangeness to the tourist appraisal. In a way, these multiply the sense of displacement and desire for authenticity that is endemic to tourist appraisal. Then my real tourist appraisal melds into that abstract act: academic investigation. And curiously, it turns out that every kind of intellectual approach to and recorded insider-knowledge of pixação has an edge of the slippage and displacement that characterizes tourist appraisal to begin with. It is not really the displacement of tourist appraisal that is the issue; pixação itself is displaced in a way that makes everyone contemplating it, recording and theorizing it, co-opting and adapting from it, complicit with tourist appraisal. Tourist appraisal becomes *par excellence* a metaphor for what happens in engaging pixação *per se*, at every documented and recorded level and in every appropriation and adaptation.

There's a final twist to be obtained from the metaphor of tourist appraisal. All the preceding articles in this issue of *Wasafiri* have been eloquent about the distinctive construction of nationhood in Brazil. This is understood as an *internal dynamic*, working through a history of letters and cultural production. The argument is: since there isn't a dominant ethnos or precedent (let's say, pre-colonial) territorially-coherent habitation to describe the national integrity of modern Brazil, that integrity is constructed through a process of coming-into-being (*formação*), fractured and contradictory as that is. The process itself confers national integrity; discussing national coming-into-being confirms that integrity. It is necessarily a contested and critical process, fraught at every point, and yet embracing and even celebrating that criticality *is* national integrity. It may be argued that to complement the internal dynamic there is also an external dynamic which constructs and confers national integrity on the state of Brazil. This is less reflexive and analytical than the critical internal dynamic, less aware of its historicity. On the contrary, it works by ascribing, gradually accumulating, stereotypical behaviour, rituals and performances, and iconic products and expressions, as ahistorical confirmation of Brazilian nationhood. There is an inevitably historical process in such ascription and accrual, which may well have a contentious relation

with the internal dynamic of conceiving nationhood. But it appears as an ahistorical, extrinsic confirmation. It gathers signifiers of Brazilianness for external consumption, for tourists, corporate brands, international cultural circulations, political insignias, and so on. These come to mind readily *before* the searching tourist sets foot on Brazil, even puts herself in a position to be a capable tourist appraiser: coffee, football, samba and carnival, favelas, Pele, Paulo Coelho (*not* Machado de Assis or Clarice Lispector, even if that makes intellectuals shudder). To some degree these are all sieved through tourist appraisal.

As *par excellence* the mote in the eye of tourist appraisal, pixação seems a gift to national branding, certainly city branding. As Brazil's presence in global finance and politics becomes ever stronger, artists and image-gurus and corporations and intellectuals will keep prodding the possibilities of pixação. Paradoxically, none of that will *be* pixação or make pixação mainstream.

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